

The Old Stone Wall

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NH Division of Historical Resources

[Elizabeth H. Muzzey](#)

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[Laura S. Black](#)

Special Projects and Compliance
Specialist

[Richard A. Boisvert](#)

State Archaeologist and
Deputy State Historic Preservation
Officer

[Edna M. Feighner](#)

Historical Archaeologist and
Review & Compliance Coordinator

[Deborah J. Gagne](#)

Grants Coordinator

[Tanya E. Krajcik](#)

Archaeologist, Records Coordinator
and Project Archaeology

[Peter Michaud](#)

National Register, Preservation Tax
Incentives & Covenants Coordinator

[Nadine Miller Peterson](#)

Preservation Planner

[Mary Kate Ryan](#)

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NH State Register

[Christina St. Louis](#)

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Vacant

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Rescue archaeology at the Jefferson VI site



Volunteers excavating at the Jefferson VI site

NH SCRAP is the acronym for the New Hampshire State Conservation and Rescue Archaeology Program. In existence for more than 30 years, SCRAP has trained hundreds of people in scientific and ethical archaeology on scores of sites. Many sites were investigated because they were in danger of damage or destruction by natural erosion or modern development. This is the "Rescue" aspect of the program. September and October 2013 saw the most immediate and concentrated rescue archaeological excavations conducted to date.

The Applebrook Bed and Breakfast in Jefferson is situated within the Israel River Complex, a dense cluster of sites that date to 12,000 years ago. The Jefferson VI site was first documented in 2010 on an abutting parcel, and in 2012 the SCRAP summer field school expanded the boundary onto the property of the B&B. At the same time, the property went into foreclosure and ownership passed to the Passumpsic Savings Bank, a local institution. Efforts to sell the property netted an offer to purchase that was contingent on the construction of a new septic system for the B&B. Negotiations with the bank by State Archaeologist and SCRAP Coordinator Richard Boisvert resulted in an agreement to allow SCRAP to conduct rescue excavations in the area of the new septic system. The bank

The DHR is a state resource agency, supported by the State of New Hampshire, by the federal Historic Preservation Fund (through a matching grant administered by the National Park Service of the US Department of the Interior), and by donated funds and services. In addition to its state functions, the DHR is also responsible for administering the federal preservation program in New Hampshire.

extended significant assistance and cooperation, allowing SCRAP full access to the property, permission to carry out necessary investigations, as well as use of facilities there for storage and logistical support. For this we are most grateful.

Field work began on September 25 by re-establishing the site grid, locating the precise areas of impact, and moving equipment and supplies into place. Full-scale excavations began on September 27 and proceeded through October 6, resumed from October 10 through 15, and final excavations were conducted on October 18. In the course of these fast-paced investigations, crews opened two blocks -- one 45 square meters and the other 15 square meters -- excavating to the bottom of the artifact-bearing levels.

Boisvert directed the effort, which was carried out by a large cadre of dedicated volunteers. The core of the effort was sustained by SCRAP volunteers who had participated in field schools and laboratory analysis, some for many years and some who had only joined SCRAP in 2013. Also answering the call for volunteers were many professional archaeologists from the region. Six NH Division of Historical Resources staff members also participated, augmenting the 49 volunteers. More 1,800 hours of labor was devoted to the rescue effort.



Sara Voorhis, Keene State College student, holding a knife or scraper.

The real story of this excavation comes from the quick and massive response to the call for assistance. Volunteers responded from all of New England plus New York, Pennsylvania and Quebec. Some were able to work for only a single day; others were present for nearly the entire span. A high school volunteer managed to persuade her principal to release her from a school day so she could participate beyond the weekends. Professional archaeological field technicians volunteered on their days off, and in some cases, after completing a full day in the field on other projects. Other

individuals rearranged their work schedules or took time off to volunteer. The response was rapid and substantial, and is a testimony to the dedication of the avocational and professional archaeological community.

While the excavations were intense and done expediently, there was no dilution of careful record keeping and attention to detail. Consequently the investigations not only retrieved thousands of artifacts but also documented a probable hearth with apparent datable charcoal and two small but dense artifact concentrations. Archaeologists wore sterile gloves to recover two distinctive artifacts; this technique makes it possible to complete protein analyses on them, hopefully revealing what kinds of animals were hunted in Jefferson. Other specialized analyses are planned, including microwear analysis to determine how the tools were used and X-Ray Florescence to determine the chemical composition of the stone tools in order to identify their origins.

The Applebrook rescue archaeology resulted in the recovery of 875 bags of artifacts, including more than a dozen Paleoindian points, each dating to approximately 12,000 years ago, and scores of other tools and tool fragments. A final count is not yet available since additional tools are being identified in the laboratory as washing and cataloging proceeds. It is clear that a substantial body of new data has been recovered through this rescue effort and that a significant contribution is being made to the understanding of New Hampshire's first inhabitants.

SCRAP has established a well-earned reputation for conducting research at endangered sites and training a large body of avocational archaeologists. The Applebrook rescue excavations are an excellent example of how community involvement and engagement can result in a major contribution to New Hampshire's heritage.

Four properties added to the State Register

The State Historical Resources Council is pleased to announce four new listings to the New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places. The most recent additions are:

The **Bath Congregational Church** has long played an important role in the social life of the community and retains a high degree of historical integrity. Built in 1873 in the Gothic Revival Style, the church is significant as an example of late 19th-century religious architecture. Listing the church to the New Hampshire State Register was the last project on which the Division of Historical Resources worked with Executive Council Raymond Burton. Councilor Burton, who passed away on November 12, 2013, was well-known for his dedication to serving his North Country community; he was also a lifetime member of the Bath Congregational Church and served as its organist for decades.



Bath Congregational Church

The **Town House in Campton** was built circa 1855 as the community's town hall, but has also served as a library and municipal court. Currently the home of the Campton Historical Society, the building is a well-preserved example of mid-19th century civic architecture.

Built in 1894 by the Wentworth Lodge of the Knights of Pythias, the **Town Hall in New Castle** served as that organization's headquarters and meeting hall until the 1920s. In 1927, the community purchased it for use as the town hall. Today, the building maintains excellent architectural details, including a columned front porch and interior pressed metal wall coverings.

One of the first purpose-built historical society buildings in New Hampshire, the home of the **Peterborough Historical Society** was funded and designed by Benjamin Russell in the Georgian Revival style and built from 1916-1920. It continues to serve as both a historical organization and a multifaceted cultural organization for the Monadnock region.

For more information about the New Hampshire State Register, visit the N.H. Division of Historical Resources website at: www.nh.gov/nhdhr.

Making the most of the Memorial Bridge plaques



The portal plaque ready for reinstallation

This past year, the "new" Memorial Bridge opened in Portsmouth, replacing the bridge that had been built in 1923 as a memorial to veterans who served in World War I. One of the final touches to the new bridge project was the installation of the decorative memorial plaque from the 1923 structure on the new bridge. That step, however, proved trickier than anticipated and called for some creative problem solving by the plaque conservators, the N.H. Department of Transportation and the N.H. Division of Historical Resources.

By 1924 four bridge informational plaques and a decorative portal plaque dedicating the 1923 bridge as a "Memorial to the Sailors and Soldiers of New Hampshire Who Participated in the World War 1917-1919" had been installed on the newly-constructed structure. When it was determined in 2011 that the Memorial Bridge needed to be replaced, the bronze plaques and their fasteners and attachments were in various levels of deterioration. Unlike the bridge itself, however, the plaques could be rehabilitated.

Prior to demolition of the bridge, the plaques were carefully removed and brought to a conservator. Dedicated members of a sub-committee of the Memorial Bridge Project Public Outreach Advisory Committee grappled with questions of where and how to reinstall the plaques. Some answers were easily reached, such as the shade of bronze chosen for the restoration. Others required extensive coordination and making use of evolving opportunities, such as placement of the three New Hampshire informational plaques alongside an interpretive panel in a newly designed park near the river.

Although the group quickly decided to install the original bronze portal memorial plaque and its decorative elements on the new bridge, the question remained as to how to retrofit a collection designed for the portal of the 1923 truss to the wider portal of the 2013 structure. Conservators completed most of the restoration work by late summer 2013, but they continued to grapple with the retrofit. In September, representatives from the NHDOT and NHDHR were invited to visit the conservators' studio to collectively decide how to treat the installation of two particularly tricky elements. Originally designed to flank the plaque and sit vertically on the inclined end posts of the 1923 bridge truss, these two elements would be left stranded if installed on the more widely-spaced end posts of the 2013 bridge. Nor could they be turned 90 degrees and re-attached sideways on the flat portal cross beam, as originally envisioned.

With the group in the studio surrounded by the pieces of the immense bronze plaque, brainstorming ensued. Various ideas to cut and re-arrange the elements so that they could fit were dismissed due to the collective goal of not destroying these original bridge features. A new idea, however, evolved into an agreed-upon plan; it eliminated the need to sever the sculptural pieces and followed best preservation practices. The base plates and ornamental sculptures will be set aside intact, and the cornice end caps will be installed and covered with new bronze plates and the numbers "1923" and "2013" -- the opening dates of the historic and new Memorial bridges. While a bit out of the ordinary and off the beaten track for most consultation under the National Historic Preservation Act, the visit to the conservators' studio was a success.



Discussing the "stranded" end ornamental plates.

2014 Moose Plate Grant round opens soon



With the start of New Year begins the start of the 2014 Conservation License Plate/Moose Plate Grant round. We hope that cities and towns from around New Hampshire will take a look at the preservation needs of their publicly owned historic buildings and apply for a grant of up to \$10,000. Look for more details later in January at www.nh.gov/nhdhr/grants/moose, or contact Grants Coordinator Deb Gagne at deborah.gagne@dcr.nh.gov with questions about this popular grant program.

Commissioner's Roundtable on Cultural & Heritage Tourism: Jan. 27

Join New Hampshire cultural and heritage tourism professionals to discuss **New Year! New Opportunities! Create new ways to bring your message to the Cultural & Heritage Tourism Market** at a Commissioner's Roundtable on Cultural & Heritage Tourism at Red River Theatres in Concord on January 27, 12:30-2:30 p.m. Van McLeod, Commissioner of the N.H. Department of Cultural Resources will lead the discussion. The event is free; please RSVP to Shelly Angers, public information officer at shelly.angers@dcr.nh.gov.

Learn more about preservation programs

To learn more about historic preservation programs and activities on the horizon, visit the [News and Events Page](#) of the N.H. Division of Historical Resources, the [NH Preservation Alliance Events web site](#), the [Association of Historical Societies of New Hampshire E-ssociate](#), and the "history" section of nh365.org. Also visit PreservationDirectory.com, a national portal with links to a wide and expanding range of preservation events, sources and resources.

[Staff](#) of the NH Division of Historical Resources prepared this newsletter.

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